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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [ZI](#) [SF](#)

SUBJECT: ANGLICAN CHURCH AND IDASA TO SEND 'UNOFFICIAL'  
ELECTION OBSERVERS TO ZIMBABWE

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Donald Teitelbaum. Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. Both the Anglican Church and South African think-tank Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) will send unofficial observers to monitor the March 29 Zimbabwean elections. The Church will send an initial team of 10 trained observers to assess the election environment, followed by six Church leaders during the actual election. IDASA will team up with South African civil society to send out 15 to 20 people to "support other democratic observers," since they do not believe they will be able to receive official status. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Durban ConGen met on 20 February with Reverend Nicholas Mkronda to discuss the Anglican Church's plans to send election monitors to Zimbabwe. Mkronda said he has been analyzing the Church's previous election missions, noting their strengths (i.e., being inside the country, having first-hand information, being able to pray with the people, being able to provide written reports, and influence views on Zimbabwe) as well as their weaknesses (i.e., ultimately their inability to transform the current situation). Mkronda said the Anglican church would like to send observers, but appeared hesitant to work with the South African Council of Churches (SACC). Mkronda questioned SACC's motives, implying that SACC was more part of the SAG's diplomatic effort than an independent actor. As a result, a group of organizations in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) -- the Diakonia, Methodists, Cardinal Napier, and PACSA (a Pietersmaritzburg Christian Organization) -- are to meet on 22 February to discuss a strategy of moving forward and garnering resources for upcoming elections. (BIO NOTE: Until recently, Mkronda, a Zimbabwean national, used to work for Crisis Coalition in Zimbabwe as their South African Coordinator. He said that he is now working in Durban on developing the church's social development ministry in KwaZulu-Natal under the auspices of the Anglican Bishop of Natal, Rubin Phillip. END NOTE.)

¶3. (C) Depending on resources, Mkronda told ConGen they would like to send out two teams:

-- The first team would go out 15-22 March and consist of 10 young people trained in election observation (NFI) who would fan out across the country (Harare, Mutare, Bulawayo, Gweru) to assess the election environment and then report back. They would also prepare for the arrival of the higher level team to be led by Bishop Rubin Phillip. Mkronda does not believe it will be difficult for the first team to get into the country as they have mechanisms that have worked for them in the past (NFI).

-- The second team would go out 23 March-4 April and

consist of six church leaders who would listen, observe, comfort people, cry, and speak out about what is going on in Zimbabwe around the elections. Mkronda admitted that if it is going well, they are willing to say so as well. This second team will inform SACC of their mission. If the SACC can collaborate with the group, he said, it would be helpful.

(NOTE: That said, however, Mkronda sounded as if the teams would go with or without SACC involvement. END NOTE)  
Mkronda noted that the second team also would be overt and acknowledged they could be blocked by Harare, but said he did not expect any problems.

¶4. (C) The Director of the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA), Ivor Jenkins, separately told PolOff on 21 February that IDASA is planning on sending between 15 and 20 people to Zimbabwe the week before the election. Teams will consist of staff from IDASA and the Institute of Justice and Reconciliation, members of civil society, and representatives of the SACC. Team members will spread out throughout the country. IDASA will not publicly advertise its mission which it describes as "supporting other democratic observers," since the organization does not believe the teams will receive official observer status.

¶5. (C) This message has been coordinated with ConGen Durban.  
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